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state, and the property of a convicted witch went to the chief. 105
Therefore the lineage was not the unrivalled principle of social
grouping among the Nyakyusa as it was among the Tallensi or
Nuer, but it was a corporate body.¹

The existence of three types of groups among the Nyakyusa 105
made for social integration. The divergent interests of villages were 152
checked by the fact that every man had kinsmen in many other
villages upon whom he was dependent, economically and ritually;
the dissimilar tendencies of lineages were checked by the loyal-
ties of lineage members to different villages; and the villages and
lineages were all held to be dependent upon their chief for the
fertility of their land, control of the weather, and success in war-
fare.

Since an account of the Nyakyusa age-villages and an outline 157
of their kinship system have already been published,² we may now
turn directly to the topic of this book, their religion.

The traditional religion of the Nyakyusa people has three 771
elements: First, there is a lively belief in the survival of the dead 105
and in the power of senior relatives, both living and dead, over
their descendants; secondly, there is a belief in medicines, that is,
in a mystical power residing in certain material substances which
is used by those who have the requisite knowledge; thirdly, there
is a belief in witchcraft, that is, an innate power to harm others
exercised by certain individuals, and in the mystical power of
fellow villagers to punish wrongdoers. This last power, 'the breath
of men', is akin to witchcraft. It may be objected that a belief in
witchcraft is in no sense 'religious', but to exclude discussion of it
in an account of Nyakyusa religion is comparable to excluding a
reference to the devil in a discussion of Christianity. Evil is a reality
which must be interpreted in one fashion or another in every
cosmology.

The belief in the survival of the dead and the power of senior
relatives, is expressed in a series of elaborate rituals, one set of
which concerns only kinsmen and are directed towards the im-

¹ There appears to be many gradations between a society with no corporate lineages,
such as the Lusi, and one like the Tallensi in which the lineage is the basis of all
important social groups, just as there are gradations between a caste society in
which all offices are treated as hereditary and groups of kinsmen, and a primitive
state in which any serious attack is an offence against the state.

² Elizabeth Wilson, op. cit. and 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and
Marriage*, ed. Radcliffe-Brown and David Forde (1951).

- 77/105 mediate ancestors of the participants, and another set which concerns chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and are directed towards the immediate ancestors of ruling chiefs and certain distant ancestors of the chiefs' line, heroes in Nyakyusa history. The name of one of these heroes, Kyala, has been used by the missionaries to translate the word 'God', but all the evidence available goes to show that Kyala was, traditionally, but one of several distant ancestors to whom regular sacrifices were made on behalf of a large group of chiefdoms. All the rituals of this type—those directed to family shades, the chiefs' ancestors, and the heroes—are concerned with that which is beneath (Jasi), not that which is above. Men look to the earth where corpses are buried, not to any sky god.
- 121 77/1 The theme of the present volume is the rituals celebrated by kinmen at death, at the puberty and marriage of a girl (the last two events usually coinciding), at birth, especially twin birth, and in misfortune. A further volume will deal with the communal rituals celebrated before the annual break of the rains; whenever public misfortune such as drought, flood, famine, or plague occurs or threatens; before battle; and when a chief is succeeded by his son, and the younger generation take over power from their elders.
- 181/ There is no circumcision or initiation of men other than the 'coming out' ceremony, when a whole generation takes over responsibility for the administration and defence of the chiefdom from their fathers. Some reference to three of the heroes—Kyala, Lwenhe, and Mhosi—is made in texts on the rituals of kinmen, but our discussion of them is postponed to the second book in which the rituals directed to them are described.
- 775 177 A section of the Nyakyusa people is Christian and its influence on pagan thought and practice is appreciable; however, discussion of this is also postponed to the second book, since it is most evident in the changing content of Kyala. There, too, the connections between change in ritual and other aspects of the social structure between 1934 and 1935 are analysed.
- 121 77/1 The Nyakyusa cult of senior relatives (like any ancient cult) is not intelligible or significant apart from a study of kinship, and it may be argued that this material should be presented only as part of an analysis of Nyakyusa kinship, but we cannot discuss everything at once and some measure of abstraction is necessary. No one ritual among the Nyakyusa is fully intelligible without reference to the whole series of rituals. The principle, propounded forty-five years ago by Professor Radcliffe-Brown, that a symbol

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recurring in a cycle of rituals is likely to have the same significance [2] in each, holds good for the Nyakyusa: certain symbols of shaving, 771 washing, eating, spreading banana leaves, scattering grain, and so forth were similarly interpreted by our informants in the different rituals of the cycle, and their full significance is only apparent when a comparison of their various uses is made. In this book, therefore, attention is focused on the ritual cycle. A comparison of numerous rites reveals a *symbolic pattern*, the counterpart, in the emotional aspect, of kinship organization in the practical aspect; and the comments of the more self-conscious Nyakyusa on the rites indicate the intellectual system linked with this pattern.

As already mentioned, the religious conceptions of the Nyakyusa 771 include the belief in medicines, in 'the breath of men', and in witchcraft, as well as in the power of senior relatives. The importance of medicines in the rituals directed to the shades will be evident in every chapter of this book. References to witchcraft and the 'breath of men' are not so frequent, since these form what is on the whole a separate system of beliefs, and refer to a different set of relationships. The ancestor cult is concerned *solely* with the relationships of kinsmen, and of the chief and their people; witchcraft and 'the breath of men' *mainly* with the relationships of fellow villagers—i.e. age mates and their wives—though it also impinges on kinship and political relationships. Only in the relationship of spouses, and that between chief and village headmen, do the two sets of beliefs constantly overlap. An account of the Nyakyusa conception of witchcraft and 'the breath of men' has [578] already been published, and it has been shown that accusations of witchcraft occur most frequently between fellow villagers and, nowadays, between fellow employees, that is, between non-relatives; they are also fairly frequently directed against wives and *concerning their accusations of witchcraft against kinsmen of the same lineage are very rare.*¹ Antagonism between kinsmen occurs and is expressed in accusations of practising sorcery, as well as in fear of the power of senior relatives, but most misfortunes are attributed to the lust and envy of neighbours or wives rather than to the malice of kinsmen. Evil is conceived of as having a personal cause, but as originating generally outside the circle of kin. The mystical power of senior relatives (living and dead) can never be used irresponsibly—it cannot operate unless the cause is just—and therefore misfortunes emanating from the shades is always a just

¹ Monica Wilson, *East Congo*, pp. 100-01, 198-105.

- 771 retribution, not an irresponsible assault, like that made by witches.

The religion of the Nyakyusa is expressed in ritual rather than in dogma. Everyone participates, at some time or another, in a variety of rituals; a great deal of time and energy is devoted to them, and they are elaborate. By comparison, the dogma and myth are limited both in content and in influence. Many more people participate in rituals than are fully conscious of dogma and myth; many more people can describe rituals than interpret them. In this analysis, therefore, the rituals are first described and the principal dogmas are deduced from the Nyakyusa interpretation of them.

- 121 771 The stress is on the Nyakyusa interpretation of their own rituals, for anthropological literature is bespattered with symbolic guessing, the ethnographer's interpretation of the rituals of other people. Now it seems probable that certain symbols are universal in the sense that they express the same ideas in all societies. Many other symbols are emotionally intelligible when interpreted—the following pages are full of examples—but it is foolish to imagine that an individual schooled in one culture can understand the symbolism of another without instruction. For this reason, and at the risk of wearying the reader, many of the texts on which this interpretation is based are quoted. The interpretations of even the most self-conscious Nyakyusa, such as Kasitile the rain-maker, Mwandisi the old blind historian, Mwasalemba, Lyandileko and Kakune the doctors, do not, of course, reveal the whole truth about Nyakyusa rituals, but *any analysis not based on some translation of the symbols used by people of that culture is open to suspicion*. The texts were recorded in the Nyakyusa language by Godfrey or Monica Wilson, or one of our two Nyakyusa clerks, Mwaikambo and Mwaisumo, and the informants most often quoted were selected for their special knowledge. And very many others discussed rituals with us.¹

Not all Nyakyusa are conscious of all the interpretations given. A few symbols, such as the association of different types of banana with male and female respectively, are known to everyone; but the meaning of many of the events in the rituals was obscure to young men and women. Most of the interpretations quoted have, however, been given by more than one informant (as is shown in the text and documents) and may be taken as common, i.e. current in

¹ For the methods of field-work of Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. vii-ix.

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the group. In the few cases in which our informant may have been [2] giving his own individual interpretation, 'putting a bucket down 77/ into his subconscious and pulling it up', it was at least a Nyakyusa subconscious, and the interpretation is in terms of the culture. It is with common, not individual, symbols that we are concerned: what is offered in this book is a sociological, not a psychological, analysis.

Similarities between the symbolism of Nyakyusa rituals and the [7] symbolism of dreams and neuroses in Western society will be [2] obvious to readers. That preoccupation with anal and oral func- 77/ tions, with 'nakedness' (though the Nyakyusa habitually wore the most exiguous of coverings), with death, coition, and birth, with mastery ('overstepping') and incest, which is characteristic of the rituals we describe, is evident also in any textbook of psychoanalysis dealing with Western Europeans and Americans; and certain symbols such as a house, a doorway, a spear, seed, and so forth are common to both cultures; but here we are not concerned to trace these similarities. Our business is to lay bare the symbolic pattern of the Nyakyusa without reference to the Western tradition.

The material used for the sociological analysis of ritual consists [28] of two types: observation or description of events, and statements [2] about associations. The greatest difficulty in presenting it has been to choose between a chronological account of each ritual, followed by the Nyakyusa translation or interpretation of the symbolism, and then by the sociological analysis; and an integrated account combining the interpretation and analysis with the description. The advantage of the first method is that the validity of both interpretation and analysis can be more easily judged since the evidence on which it is based is fully set out; the disadvantage is that the description itself implies interpretation and analysis. The symbolism is often implicit in the description of events, and the separation of description from interpretation involves repetition; at the same time the classification of events and symbols is itself a form of analysis, and the separation of description from analysis tends to conceal this. The present study is a compromise between the two approaches. Where events and their symbolism are fairly straightforward, the interpretation accompanies the description; but where, as in the rituals of farewell to the dead, puberty and marriage, and abnormal birth, they are complicated, and the interpretation may well be questioned, accounts of the events are separated from detailed evidence on symbolism. Analysis is neces-

[12] sarily implied all through, but since the argument can only be unfolded step by step (for no one ritual can be fully analysed until all are described) a discussion of it is reserved to the concluding chapters. In interpreting the symbolism, cross reference between the different rituals of the cycles would be too frequent to give in the text. Readers wishing to follow up references to the symbolism of bananas, for example, or *lipili* medicine, should use the index.

771 The link between religious beliefs and morality (in the sense of
577 right behaviour) is very clear among the Nyakyusa. Many misfortunes are attributed to sin, that is, wrong-doings (*isungu*) thought to be supernaturally punished. Indeed, to the Nyakyusa the idea of the wicked man 'spreading himself like a green bay tree'¹ is inconceivable, and the disciples' question: 'Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'² cold common sense. Here we are concerned with the form of morality³ sanctioned by Nyakyusa religion, with the conception of good and evil, and with [128] the relation between belief and behaviour.⁴ A table of private misfortunes attributed to the anger of senior relatives is included in this volume; public misfortunes will be discussed in the succeeding one; and a table of misfortunes attributed to witchcraft, sorcery, and the legitimate anger of neighbours ('the breath of men') has been given in the study of Nyakyusa age-villages already published.⁵ While the Nyakyusa lay great emphasis on the correct performance, in every detail, of certain rituals, their very performance implies co-operation between kinamen, and not only co-operation but amity. For 'anger in the heart', if unconfessed, may bring misfortune. Thus though the outward form is stressed, the inward and spiritual is not totally ignored.

[121] We proceed on the assumption that men express in ritual what moves them most; that the form of expression is conventional and obligatory, and that therefore in ritual the values of a group (as opposed to those of individuals) are revealed.

¹ Psalm xxxiii: 9.

² John ix, 2.

³ I cannot accept Professor Radcliffe-Brown's definition of morality as the control of conduct by 'public opinion and conscience' as opposed to control by religion. Nor do I accept Professor MacIntyre's argument that primitive man has an idea of good quite apart from religion. A. E. Taylor's view of morality comes much closer to the facts as shown in Nyakyusa society.

cf. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, p. 170; A. MacIntyre, *Experiments in Living*, Clifford Lectures 1948-9; A. E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Scientist*, Clifford Lectures 1926-8.

⁴ The germ of the book is Geoffrey Wilson's 'An African morality', *Africa*, 1956.

⁵ Monica Wilson, *God and Gossip*, pp. 198-213.

121 object or action which it is felt to resemble. The images men use,
811 the things they feel to be alike, are determined in a general way by
the form of the society, and Nyakyusa images are in terms of
bananas, staple grains, cattle, smithing on a primitive forge, line-
age organization and so on. There are cultural idioms, accepted
forms of expression, which frequently recur, but the particular
associations are not predictable any more than the associations
made by a poet in our own society—the priest and the doctor are
indeed in one aspect poets.*

771 The essence of Nyakyusa ritual is that things which are felt to
813 be alike are taken as causally connected. Both positive actions and
843 avoidances or taboos are based on the assumption that like objects
or actions react on one another. This was clearly recognised by an
informant who remarked: 'avoidances come from resemblances.'
The basis is invariably the *feeling* of likeness, but mixed up with
this there is often exact observation, as in the following taboo. The
husband of a pregnant woman may not hunt big game because,
it is said, they will be unusually fierce and attack him particularly.
The association made is between a pregnant woman who is irri-
table, 'fierce' (*akali*), and the game which is fierce. The husband is
identified with his wife, 'and', the Nyakyusa say, 'lion always
attack a cow in calf'. Sometimes like things are felt to be antagon-
istic, as 'seed in the belly' and seed in the ground, and sometimes
sympathetic. Sometimes like is thought to produce like—a preg-
nant woman is forbidden to sit close to someone lest she bears
twins—and sometimes men mime a misfortune as a prophylactic
against it.

789 The rituals are magical in the sense that efficacy is held to lie in
184 the particular material form,¹ but they vary in detail with the
771 cultural group, just as the language does.² The rituals of the Lake-
shore plain in Tanganyika (Mt. Ngonde) and of Selva are almost
identical, but those of the Kukwe, the Lugulu, the Sakai, the Ndali,
the Penja, and the people of Ngonde in Nyasaland are all some-
what different. Differences in ritual are directly connected by the
people themselves with differences in lineage, and the principle is
maintained that every individual follows the ritual of his or her
father's lineage, though a married woman will follow that of her

¹ For a discussion of this characteristic of magic cf. G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change* (1947), pp. 75-8; 86-87.

² An account of the various cultural groups included under Nyakyusa, and of related peoples, is given in *Good Company*, pp. 1-5.

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husband when at her husband's home. Kakune, a doctor, explained: 'The ritual for a woman is that of her husband's group, always. My mother was Lugala, but at her death we did the Kukwe ritual. If my daughter marries a Sangu and dies, they will do the Sangu ritual; she has moved.' We attended a death ritual which was actually performed in two slightly different ways by two sets of mourners. A member of a Sangu family, long established in Selya, had died; sons and daughters of the family performed what was said to be the Sangu ritual, but the children of daughters married to Selya men performed the Selya ritual. Whether the Sangu ritual is really so similar to the Selya ritual as this celebration suggests is doubtful—it seems unlikely, since the Sangu are very different from the Nyakyusa in other respects and their languages are not mutually intelligible—but some sort of adjustment had been made by this foreign family living in Selya and by others in a like position. Our informants expected to find parallels to the events of their own rituals in the rituals of neighbouring groups, and they expected also to find minor differences. Any variations are explained by the phrase 'that is the custom in their lineage', and the officiant is the final arbitrator as to what is correct. A number of informants also pointed out that the staple foods were used in the death ritual and that these varied somewhat with the area. 'We eat the principal food of the country—it differs with different people. The Kisi and Ngonde (of Nyasaland) use fish, the Ndali use goats, we Nyakyusa cannot use rice but the Swahili would. Our food is bananas.' The pumpkin, which we also use, is a very old vegetable and is still much eaten; it is one of the best vegetables. The Sangu use millet porridge, the Penja maize and beans.

In this book are described the rituals of the main cultural groups of the Nyakyusa—those of the people of Selya and Masoko and the Lake-shore plain (McNgonde)¹ which are similar, and those of the Kukwe which are different, and a few references are made to other variations. The variations are suggestive, for though the details differ, the values and attitudes expressed are identical. There are also minor differences between families of the same cultural group, and in the practice of different officiants, but their

¹ The Nyakyusa use *shindi* as a general word for plantain and banana, though *shindi* is properly one variety of plantain. 'Banana' is used here to include all varieties of banana and plantain.

² cf. Maxine Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 2.

128 interpretation scarcely differ. Thus the commonly accepted idea
134 that ritual forms are more stable than the interpretation of sym-
771 bolism¹ does not hold for the Nyakyusa.

128 The account of the ritual cycle begins with an analysis of funeral
771 rites, for of all the family rituals they involve the greatest emo-
tional tension and are the most elaborate, as well as being per-
formed far more frequently than any others. Moreover, in them
are adumbrated symbolic patterns which recur again and again
throughout the cycle; in them is apparent that preoccupation with
fertility characteristic of the cycle—they are a rite of creation as
well as a farewell to the dead—and in them lies the key to an
understanding of the conception of the *abanyika*, 'those who have
risen from the dead', that is, the shades.

128 The principal participants in the rituals are immediate kin—
771 parents and children, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren—
but the circle included varies with the particular ritual concerned
and more distant relatives and neighbours are involved in varying
degrees. In order to bring out these differences and avoid repeti-
tion, the detailed discussion of who takes part is deferred until
after all the rituals have been described.

000 Should any Nyakyusa, reading this, feel that matters have been
revealed which should remain secret, I would remind them that
the interpretation of traditional ritual reveals a profound simi-
larity in the fantasies of the Nyakyusa and those of other races;
and such understanding of the dark places of men's minds as the
abanyika possess may swell that body of knowledge which is the
heritage of men of all races and cultures.

¹ A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1930), pp. 155-7;
A. N. Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effects* (1928), p. 72.

Nyakyusa

Kukwe

126 RITUALS OF KINSHIP AMONG THE NYAKYUSA

881 When we have finished the

834 ritual I come together with my wife again, but if our child is unmarried
 [834] it is taboo to procreate a child, we practise *coitus interruptus*, the semen falls on the mat. . . . This is until the girl goes to her husband, until she is married. If my wife wears a bark-cloth I say to her during our daughter's puberty ritual: 'Arrange your bark-cloth carefully lest I, the man, desire you, I shall catch hold of you and we will cause the shade to make our child barren.' When she has gone to her husband we say our shade has finished, he has gone away in the water. Our child has gone to another shade. Yes, she also has intercourse with her husband at his home, but that does not matter, I have intercourse with my wife.

834 He was emphatic that the parents begin full intercourse as soon as the girl goes to her husband, it is not necessary to wait for her to become pregnant.

833 QUESTION: What do the spirits do in intercourse?

775 MWASALEMBA: The shade causes my penis to stand up and says: 'Go to the woman, there.' And also the woman's shade says: 'Your husband comes into you.' It is the shades which create desire, then we have intercourse, the shades meet together, hers—the woman's—and mine. If I do not go to my wife the shade says: 'Why, what's wrong with my place? Are there thorns? Why do you not enter?' They brood over (*bitebatale*) us both, both me and my wife.

QUESTION: What do they want?

MWASALEMBA: They want to create a child.

838 QUESTION: Why then do men desire masturbation and sodomy? [At 775 first when I asked this he said: 'No, the shade is a woman,' but then he corrected himself].

639 MWASALEMBA: It is the shade which creates this desire, we have it within. A youth masturbates, the semen falls on the ground—perhaps two youths; it's also the shade. And a woman also masturbates. . .

775 QUESTION: You perform the rituals for many reasons?

• 771 MWASALEMBA: Yes, if we do not perform the rituals the shade broods on us and we do not bear children. Perhaps he broods on the crops, and they do not grow well but poorly, perhaps we run mad.

On another occasion Mwasalemba said:

775 The shade is in the heart. It is the shade which desires to go to a
 833 woman, which causes us men to have erections and excites desire in women. If you have not got the shade you are impotent, you do not go to women. We say: 'The shade has brooded over this man, why do they not rouse him to go to women?' He just looks at women. Then the shade rouses up in the belly and says: 'Ha!' It rouses up and the man has intercourse with a woman. If it has brooded over him, it does not

795 the case of a Christian who had stayed away from a ritual in his
184 family and 'as soon as he met his relatives he fell sick and coughed
788 like an animal. So they got some of the lees of the beer and gave
it to him and he recovered.' A number of Christian kinsmen,
leaders in the Church, did not come to the gasping-cough ritual
which we attended, but others did come and sipped the beer, or
had the lees sent to them at their homes. In the ritual for protec-
tion against sorcery which we watched a Christian brother and
his wife took part.

And some Christians, though they deny the necessity of many
of the pagan rituals for themselves as Christians, still believe them
to be necessary to their pagan kinsmen. Hence the anomalous (and
to the missionaries the highly unorthodox) position of a woman
professing Christianity and acting as officiant in a pagan ritual, as
did N. in the death ritual for Kalata's mother (p. 239). N., it
will be remembered, came by night. The officiant who performed
the ritual for Mwakobela's twins was under instruction as a
Christian and was proposing to hand on her medicines to her
daughter, a pagan, when she herself was received into the Church.
She explained this when Mwakobela (her patient) asked her:
'And what shall we do for twin medicine when you become a
Christian?' And we had little doubt that she believed in the
efficacy of her medicine for pagans.

Though Christians cannot go through pagan rituals as prin-
cipals they do not withdraw altogether: they often help their
pagan neighbours as grave-diggers at a funeral and in the provi-
sion of food for guests at funerals and marriages; and the young
men and girls may dance as a separate group, singing their own
[578] songs or hymns and ignoring the drums. Sometimes acute rivalry
between the two groups of dancers is apparent.

• 771 The effect of Christian teaching on pagan ritual is not limited
177 to the partial withdrawal of professing Christians. In those villages
most influenced by missions, such as Iloilo, near Rungwe, there is
considerable scepticism among pagans, and many of them curtail
the rituals in their families, or do not attend them. The Christian
view is that 'the pagans see that the Christians disregard the
rituals and nothing happens to them, so they begin to ignore them
too'. 'Pagans fear much less than they used to do.'

177 Men who are in European employment either inside or outside
464 the district cannot attend all the rituals. Their case is partially
met by keeping the lees of the ritual beer with which to treat them

or his crops fail, or his cattle die, he reflects on any quarrels he may have had with kinsmen or affines or neighbours, and on any rituals he should have performed and has omitted wholly or in part. He may be quite clear in his own mind that the misfortune is due to some particular wrong-doing (*inangwa*)—perhaps a quarrel with a brother, or neglect to kill for his new neighbours on his inheritance from his father—and proceed directly to patch up the quarrel and perform the neglected ritual. More often he thinks of several possible causes and lays them before the oracle, relying upon it to select between them. How several possible causes of misfortune occurred to the chief sufferers, their kinsmen and neighbours, is shown in the cases of Enesi, Katasya, Mwambuputa and Mpoma quoted at the end of the book (pp. 258 ff.).

No linguistic distinction is made between an offence punished by the courts and one thought to be punished by the shades; both are wrong-doings (*inangwa*), and there is no sharp distinction between an offence against a living kinsman and an offence against a dead one. In short, there is no clear conception of 'sin' as opposed to 'tort' or 'crime'.

There are two themes constantly recurring in Nyakyusa theology: firstly, men must observe the traditional rituals (both positive and negative) or they will go mad; and secondly, the anger of senior relatives and neighbours will injure unless it is confessed and goodwill expressed.

The first conception is a magical one:¹ what is required is the performance or avoidance of particular acts in a particular form on particular occasions; the second is sacramental, it is 'anger in the heart' that is dangerous, and no ritual is held to be efficacious without a change of heart.

Often the two conceptions are not consciously related to one another: again and again one is told: 'The rituals must be performed or men will go mad,' and there is no reference to the state of mind of the performers; but on certain occasions they overlap explicitly, as when Kasile adjured his kinsmen to confess all while they were performing the ritual to 'rot the ropes'; and always there is a symbolic connection, for the rituals themselves express the value of amity between kinsmen, of respect for seniors and obligation towards juniors.

The neglect of the marriage ritual is itself an expression of disrespect for parents or parents-in-law, and a breach of the sex code,

¹ In the sense defined by G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 49-50.

686 shades usually do, and I shall wander a long time on the way to the land of the shades because I shall have no relatives to show me the way. And then when I get there I shall still have trouble. They will drive me away from them, and I shall live alone, apart from them, quite separate.

775 More rarely a shade is said to be angry because his grave has
764 been left unswept, or he has not been buried where he asked to be.

621 The kinds of behaviour believed to be punished by 'the breath
681 of men' are very similar to those thought to be punished by the anger of senior kinsmen; and, indeed, as we have seen, kinsmen and neighbours may murmur together against a son who has seduced his father's wife, a girl who has behaved insultingly to her parents-in-law, either verbally or by a breach of avoidance, and an heir who has neglected his wards or has neglected the customary ritual for his father, more particularly the customary killing of a cow when he enters into his inheritance. It is said that neglect to provide them with certain customary feasts infuriates neighbours more than anything else.¹

The misfortunes that threaten from the neglect of rituals, and from the anger of kinsmen and neighbours, are loss of sanity, of life or health or fertility; a difficult labour or a lingering death; repeated miscarriages; loss of beauty (a wicked woman goes bald or turns reddish); scanty crops or sick herds, or, nowadays, unemployment—the man whose father is angry does not find a job. Only rarely is it suggested that punishment may be postponed until after death and then what is feared is that the shades of the lineage will not receive their kinsman.

775 When Nyakyusa talk about their religion they speak mostly of
• 771 external things, of the rituals, of the angry words spoken by kin-
658 men or neighbours and of the fearful effects upon one against whom this anger is directed. Misfortune is said to be brought down on a man by his parents muttering in anger over the fire, by people murmuring against him (the word used is that for the humming of a hive of bees). The emphasis is on outspoken complaint or criticism. But it is also thought that 'the shades see what is within a man': if he stints one wife of fish, then 'even though the woman herself has not said anything, the shades hear the thought of the belly'. Sleeplessness and an unquiet mind are taken as evidence of the anger of the shades or the attacks of witches.

¹ cf. Minnie Wilson, *Cord Company*, pp. 103-4.

'*Tuigoma* (we do not sleep),' is the formal phrase with which the village headman and other responsible people notify the chief that all is not well with the country, or with which a woman or a junior kinsman prefaces the troubles brought to the notice of the head of the homestead, when these troubles have not obviously materialized in sickness. Anger is dangerous first and foremost to the person against whom it is directed, but there is also the suggestion that it may react on the person who is angry. We have already quoted the remark: 'A woman never murmurs against anyone. If she does she falls sick herself.'

How the fear of the shades is inculcated in a child is shown in the following text: 775
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I began by learning the word or name: *nyaka*, and to know that the shade (*nyaka*) was someone who had died, and people said that they were like flickering shadows (*imigangula*). Also people said a shade is someone very awesome (*nyika*) if he appears to you. When I began to think of the shades at night I could not sleep because I feared the awfulness (*adwipa*) of which they spoke. And this was specially told: 'If a person dies to-day, and perhaps you have not heard, then that dead man appears to you with cattle. He is smeared with earth on his face and forearms and knees. Then, because you do not know anything, you say: "Friend," and talk with him, saying: "Where are you going with the cattle?" He says: "I am going to my in-laws." Then if you go home and find they are wailing a death, and you tell your tale, they say: "So-and-so has died, you met him." They say you also will die. But you must be silent, and only speak after they have buried him.' So in my belly, in my thought, the shades appeared very fearful. Many people compare the awfulness of the shades with that of wild animals, and say the awfulness of the shades is greater. If a shade is standing here, and a wild animal there, you will flee towards the animal. So I also thought. But later I changed my mind, and said I would go towards the shade.

Once when there was some sickness at home I heard it said that the shades were angry, perhaps because there had been a quarrel, perhaps because he [ni] had not killed a cow for a relative's funeral. Once when I was ill with sores round the mouth, people said: 'Mind, the shades have crossed them'—that was to be 'beaten' by the shades. So, when they had consulted an oracle, they poured a little beer on the fire-bridge and prayed. Then the illness disappeared very quickly. When I asked my mother about it she said: 'The shades were angry, so you were ill. It was because your father was angry, or perhaps on some other account.' Thus I learnt the work of the shades, little by little, from illness among my parents and stories of my elders.

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554 linked to the physiological cycle of individuals and their close kin,
and cannot be detached from it as in Christianity.

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626 Law is a condition of social survival; no society can exist with-
out it; and in so far as religion helps to maintain law and order it
fulfills a necessary social function. Among the Nyakyusa (and per-
haps in all societies) order is maintained partly by fear of super-
natural sanctions. The rituals we have described both enhance
fear and relieve it. They harness fear to social ends.

121
771 The preceding chapters are full of the pagan fear of death,
menstruation, childbirth, and shedding blood. The rituals express
the fear and teach men what they must do to be saved. They teach
them to co-operate with their kinsmen and to follow traditional
custom, for in that alone does salvation lie. The fear of madness or
sterility compels each generation to follow traditional custom as
ordained for them by the heroes: thus is the dependence of man
upon his society instilled. The death ritual illustrates this most
dramatically. In every society men must overcome death emotion-
ally, they must turn to life. In the death ritual the mourners are
distracted, terrified; they express their grief and put it behind
them; their relatives and neighbours gather round them, share
their sorrow, and help them to overcome it. The dead is replaced.
Death is associated with fecundity and so made tolerable. It is no
accident that the Nyakyusa interpret all the rituals, and especially
the death ritual, as a protection against going mad, against the
disintegration of the personality. And safety is assured to the
living by following minutely the traditions of their lineage.

[74] That the nature of men's fears is culturally determined is clear
from the Nyakyusa evidence, for Christians and pagans alike are
agreed that 'the Christians fear much less' than do pagans, and
the Christians do in fact ignore taboos which the pagans feel to be
binding. But the rituals do not create fear out of nothing. All the
situations in which they are performed—birth and death, mar-
riage, and misfortune—are situations of emotional tension in all
societies. The rituals heighten the emotions and canalise them.
They both teach men to feel, and teach them what it is proper to
feel.

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783 Many writers have shown us that the conception of sacred in-
cludes both the idea of holiness and of pollution;¹ that the awful,
the fearful, may be conceived both as pure and as filthy. In

¹ See particularly W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1894), pp. 125, 461-64 (1914 ed.); R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (1927).

SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RITUALS OF KINSHIP 233

Nyakyusa thought the emphasis is almost exclusively on the filthy. Awe is expressed in terms of pollution. As we have seen, there is a clear conception of resurrection, of separation between rotting corpse and shade, but still the shades are 'filthy', and the mourner, or the bride, or the mother and newborn child, who is identified with them, is filthy too. There is a conception of purity, innocence, whiteness (*musala*), which is applied to those free from witchcraft or other crime, and to virgins, but it is not cited as an attribute of the shades or of the heroes; indeed, it is those who have been separated from the shades or *Kyala* who are pure.

Nyakyusa religion is characterised by two things: the general linking of misfortune with sin—the conception that if someone falls ill physically or mentally it is usually because he or his kinsman has done wrong—and the preoccupation with pollution. These are connected. The chief sins are neglect of ritual and quarrelling between kinsmen. Now neglect of ritual is, in essence, failure to purify oneself—failure to separate from the filthy shade—therefore sin and pollution are linked, though not identified. The connection between pollution and quarrelling between kinsmen is less direct but it exists, for rituals, the means of purification, are also the occasion for composing quarrels, and cleansing oneself of anger by confession—spitting it out—is a condition of their efficacy.

That the Nyakyusa are dogged by the sense of guilt is clear, but whether it is more overwhelming in their society than in others, or merely more openly expressed, is arguable. Why some people look down to earth, to the rotting corpse and bodily excretions which are buried in the earth, and express their awe in terms of pollution, corruption, and others look to the sky and express it in terms of light and purity; why some people seek union with God and others separation from Him, we do not know. The answer to these, as to many questions regarding Nyakyusa religion, lies beyond the field of this investigation.

The Chief & his Counsellors 69

hedged with a real divinity, which the limitations to which he has to submit, and the independence of the once-subordinate chiefs, have not yet destroyed. He remains pre-eminently the man of prayer, who carries to the ancestral spirits the petitions of the community, and speaks to them with an authority which no other possesses. 643

Far excelling in power and authority even the greatest of the chiefs were, and, shorn of much of their glory are, the *amalahara*, the councillors of *Chungu*. These men are in many cases chiefs of high rank, but even when they are not so, their position endows them with great influence and authority. The principal duties of the councillors were to put the reigning *Chungu* to death when he became seriously ill, a duty which has necessarily lapsed under British rule; to select, with the help of divination, his successor; to instruct him in his duties, to advise him in all matters which demand decision; and to depose him if he is unsatisfactory. 645

The health of the priest-king and the welfare of the whole community were inseparably bound up together. A *Chungu* in health and vigour meant a land yielding its fruits, rain coming in its season, evil averted. But a weak and ailing *Chungu* meant disasters of many kinds. Smaller illnesses *Chungu*, very excusably, concealed from his councillors, hoping that his ancestors would hear the prayers which he offered secretly by night. But when serious illness overtook him, the councillors were called to a full meeting by those who were about the person of the 771

70 The Chief & his Counsellors

643 chief. For Change must not die a natural death ;
645 the land would be turned into water should such a
771 calamity be allowed to happen. Having decided that
the illness is really grave, the councillors, one by one,
give their voice in the formula, "Sile na wusala,"
literally, day and year ; but actually meaning, "Does
God die?" In solemn procession these terrible
persons enter the house, and, having turned out the
chief's wives, lay him down on the floor. Two keep
him in that posture, while a third stops his breath by
holding his mouth and nostrils, a fourth meanwhile
gently slapping him all over the body until the life
has gone out of him.

643 No announcement of the death was made. One of
645 the councillors lived in the royal dwelling, so that if
766 any came to consult Change a response might be
given, and as he was rarely seen by common men, it
was easy to keep up the deception. The councillors
with their own hands digged the grave, and on their
shoulders, at midnight, carried the body, anointed
with lion fat, and enwrapped in cloth, to the place of
burial. Six or eight slaves, who did not return, went
with them. Four went down into the grave to receive
the body of their dead master, two at the head and
two at the feet, and, in sitting position, held him in
their arms. The remaining slaves being placed on the
top, the soil was filled in on living and dead.

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After the lapse of about a month, a big iron drum,
now lost, was beaten, and it conveyed only one
message to the people. "Katalia la Mphande,"
Mphande (the royal residence) has done its work;

CHAPTER VI

Law & Crime

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LAW, morals, and religion are inseparably bound up together. The old idea, still hard to kill, that in the native mind morals and religion have no connection with each other, is the reverse of the truth; but African ideas of morality do not always coincide with European, and to this disparity may be traced the belief that there is no morality in African religion. The sinless man is the man who has broken no law. He is said to be *muwa*, without offence. Now as law and custom are one, and as the spirits are jealous for the retention of all customs that were in force while they were on earth, the man who is assured of a good reception in the underworld is he who has either broken no law of custom, or, having broken the law, has made the required atonement to the injured person.

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Everything was settled in the long distant past by the fathers, and all one has to do is to conform. For the long domination of ancient custom in law, morals, and religion, meant that life had attained to a condition of stable equilibrium, before the coming of the white man set all in confusion again for many of the people. The ancient equilibrium was disturbed by

116 Domestic Animals : Agriculture

231 a cow about to be delivered of a calf was rushed down to running water, and the calf, when delivered, immediately submerged. Then cow and owner ran for their lives, and when the scourge had passed over, the owner, if he survived, took the calf out of the water, resuscitated it, and let it go. The explanation given to me by a medical colleague of the conditions under which such a thing is possible, render it highly probable that if ever it occurred at all, it must have been very rarely, and even less in times of war than in times of peace. What is interesting, however, is the fact that the physiological possibility of it is known to the natives. I have not met anyone who has seen it done.

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771 *Agriculture.*—St. Paul would almost certainly have told the Konde that they were "too religious"; not because he would have seen tokens of their religiousness in the streets and villages; no mere passer-by, and no indifferent foreigner, ever sees that. One must look deep, and live long among them, before that side of their life reveals itself to him with any fulness. There is hardly an act of theirs that is not accompanied by a ceremony of some kind, if that is religion, and to them it undoubtedly is. Agriculture is a highly religious occupation on that view, but hardly more so than many others. Leaving native Christians aside, the great majority of the people consult a diviner before beginning to hoe. He may say that all is well; or he may discover that some spirit stands in the way of a good crop, and must be propitiated; or that a certain piece of ground is bewitched, and no good will come of hoeing it until the spell has been removed.

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188 The Supreme Being

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that the pool was bubbling, it was evident that Mwanjebi was there, and must be got rid of as soon as possible. Prayers and promises of repentance were offered, and if that did not satisfy the god, more drastic measures were taken. A great stone was heaved and tumbled into the pool, around which gathered a great multitude of people, stabbing fiercely at the water with spears and reeds, to drive off the unwelcome deity. The cessation of the bubbling showed that he had gone, and the fact was still further proved when the smallpox ceased. All three gollies are now mere memories, and, except as memories, they have completely vanished, leaving the field clear for the ancestral spirits and the Supreme Being.

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There was in the worship, if indeed a determined effort to drive off the deity could be called worship, "no stimulus to the realization of the riches which are given to man in his own nature." The gods presented no problems, for all problems were solved long ago by the fathers; and hence man's relation to them contained nothing upon which the faculties might work and be developed. The religion was stagnant, and the people were stagnant with it.

There was no art; not even rude representations of the gods; no poetry arising out of a feeling of devotion, for devotion there was none. In the case of the gollies I have mentioned, even the qualities which caused them to take rank as gods after death have been forgotten. It may be that the stories of "the brave days of old," to be related in a later chapter, afford us a hint of how the process of dedica-

The Supreme Being 189

tion, now probably at an end for ever, went on in the past. But the Konde, in common with all Bantu peoples, made the great transition from a vague ill-conceived "power behind an object or an act, to the free being conceived with human attributes and feelings," who can interfere in the affairs of the community, even if it be also true that such gods roused themselves into activity only when evil demanded punishment, remaining quiescent except under such stimulus. 77/ •

CHAPTER XVI

The Worship of the Spirits

371 **T**HE Konde are either a deeply religious, or a deplorably spirit-ridden people; and, having regard to some of the prayers given in this chapter and throughout the book, I am inclined to think that religious is the more correct term. It is true that the prayers are in all cases for material goods, such as health and good fortune, for rain and crops, for protection against pestilence; but if religion means a sense of dependence upon unseen powers, then it cannot be denied that the Konde are religious.

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776 On all great occasions, prayer and offerings are made; but also when a spirit is believed to be angry: if there is quarrelling in the family; if a man beats his wife; if a girl has arrived at puberty, or a marriage has been arranged, without their being consulted; if a woman has been unfaithful to her husband; if a man neglect his parents; if ceremonies are neglected; or the spirits themselves forgotten. Their wrath is shown very specially by a disease of the lips breaking out on the guilty person, and by fever; but also in many other ways; by the failure of the beer to ferment, by sickness, by a storm in which some one is drowned, by

Wonder Medicine

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memories and yarns, cats food made from the flour 755
of a pumpkin, which destroys the virtues of his hunt-
ing medicines, and at the same time takes away all
probability of his death being the prolonged wear-
iness it would otherwise be.

Fishing nets are dragged to ensure a good catch; 789
but here again caution must be exercised, for a very 296
great catch is an omen of a very large family, which 787
is not always an ambition held by the Konde people.

The mother who has just given birth to a child 846
must not cook food, nor may she warm herself at the 789
common fire; a small fire is kindled for her at which
she sits by herself; and when the child goes out of
the house for the first time a medicine is put into its
mouth to guard it against the ill of the world into
which it has come.

Christians do none of these things; but Christians 789
are not as other people. They have passed away from 771
the fear of spirit and from the dread of a world in
which anything may happen at any moment; and
the fact that they escape the consequences of failure
to follow custom is having its effect on the common
people, many of whom are cautiously experimenting
to see whether they too may live a freer and more
unshadowed life; but the belief in the protective
powers of such things as I have been describing does
hard.

structure. We shall see in later sections how many details of the secular power of Mbonde and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions. But the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular content at all, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the other chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the "clearing out of the sides" was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruit ritual at all;¹ while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

Besides the Kyungu the great chiefs of Ngondo also were believed to be able to avert local droughts and misfortunes in their districts by offerings to their own immediate ancestors; and the lesser chiefs likewise and the territorial nobles—each in his own little area. While among the territorial nobles, the original owners of the land had wider powers. It will be remembered that to them the first Kyungu is said to have given head-cloths and asked for their prayers. Sometimes people would prophesy future misfortune "at Kinindile", or "at Kabama" or "at Hando," or would prophesy of present misfortunes that such was their cause. Then the territorial noble concerned² would be formally visited by the nobles of Ngondo, and he and they together would offer sacrifice to his ancestors on behalf of all Ngondo.

And then also there were sacred spots near the lake—Nthola, Kamwe, Kibondo, Malole and Katindi. They were associated not with ancestral spirits at all but with a vaguely defined supreme deity named Mbonde. And beside them also prayers and sacrifices were made from time to time by the nobles of Ngondo.

Over these other spiritual powers we need not linger, save to notice one most significant fact. The participation by the Kyungu in the divinity of his ancestors was no isolated phenomenon in Ngondo. The head of every family in the country, whether of chiefs or commoners, was similarly placed; in his own family and, in the case of a chief or noble, in his own area too, he was both a priest and a demigod; he dealt with the spirits and by virtue of his relation to them shared their powers; his anger could curse. The Kyungu were but the greatest of many divinities. And thus there was in this ritual a high degree of local and family autonomy; local or family misfortunes

¹ Particular people among the Nyakyusa carried it out: assigning chiefs, senior great-men, prophets, and any person whose father was held to be due to magical treatment of a previously barren woman. But only they.

² Mbonde Kinindile, Mbonde Kabama, Mbonde Hando, etc.

were dealt with by the local rulers or by the family-heads, not by the central authorities. It was only occasionally that general fears or misfortunes turned all men's thoughts together to Mbande.

Now the great-commoners of every chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits and this gave them a spiritual hold over him. If they compared him too unfavorably with his predecessors then, it was believed, those predecessors might hear and afflict him in various ways. And so it was also with the nobles of Ngondo and the reigning Kyrungu. But as this belief was intimately linked with the belief in witchcraft it will be more conveniently analysed in that context.¹

(b) THE MAGICAL ELEMENT.

Magic (the belief that certain particular objects, events, words or actions, involving particular people in particular situations, possessed in themselves an extraordinary power) was an essential ingredient of the old pagan religion of Ngondo. While the greatest magical object in the country was, traditionally, the body of the Kyrungu. And the fact that the central political authority of Ngondo was so largely vested in the nobles of Ngondo was due above all to their responsibility for counselling this magical object in the public interest.

If the Kyrungu cut himself, and more particularly if his blood fell to the ground, then it was the duty of the nobles of Ngondo to kill him, but the whole land be afflicted with disease; and if he was ill likewise. "They considered that if his blood fell to the ground that was his life falling. And they likened him to a god, considering it taboo for a god to be wounded; they thought that if his blood fell to the ground it would turn into a sickness and all the people would die. And so, when the Kyrungu was wounded, they thought it best to put him out of the way and start afresh with a new one. They thought it taboo for him to have even the slightest wound on his body. And it was equally taboo for him to fall ill; everyone else, it was believed, would fall ill too; it was better to put him out of the way so that the people should keep well."

In consequence of this belief elaborate precautions were taken to maintain the Kyrungu's health. Sexual impurity was believed to be magically dangerous to health in many ways and so the Kyrungu, above all men, must be guarded from it. It was not considered safe even for his own wives to cook his food, but one of them touch it during a menstrual period, and so young boys who had not yet reached puberty

¹ *File after page 3 (b).*

sheep cost it; if it still refused they would kill a cow; and if it still refused then they would kill a human being, the child of a commoner.

Then there was *Mafina*, a porous piece of iron "like a mouth organ," which the Kyranga used to make rain. If he held it up out of doors with its holes clear, so that he could see right through them, then it would be fine, but if he stopped up the holes and then held it up out of doors the sky would at once become overcast and rain would fall. And there were his silver tails set in horn handles, with medicine in the handles, which his people carried to war to give them victory; and his spear *Kamisa*, and so on.

There is no sharp distinction in the pagan religion of Ngunda and the Ndyakusa between its magical and its theistic elements. Sometimes the magical, sometimes the theistic predominates, but often they are inextricably mixed. In the prayers and sacrifices to the ancestral magic spirits at every turn: particular people, a particular place, particular materials and gestures, particular words are held to be essential to their success. Nor are the more permanent and obvious magical objects always free from divine associations. When we asked, for example, why the drum *Mamukulu* had needed occasional human sacrifice to make it work properly we got this answer: "It was because their god¹ had given this drum to the Kyranga saying: 'I alone am war, there is none other war now on me.' It (the human sacrifice) was like a prayer." The refusal of *Mamukulu* to sound was like the prophetic fit that fell on people (from the spirits) commanding sacrifice (in the groves)." Or, again, it is clear from our evidence that the living Kyranga's power of causing a drought was believed to arise both from his relationship to the spirits and from his possession and use of *Mafina* together. His magical body and possessions, being inherited from his predecessors, were part of his relationship to them.

Now one of the material facts which had magical significance in Ngunda was that of general social status. The magical powers of the Kyranga not only contributed to the general political authority of Ndyakusa but were, in part, magically derived from it. Only the greatest in the land could possess the greatest magic without endangering his life. There were, for example, a number of chiefs' medicines (*Ngula*), and if a chief used a medicine which was above his status then it was believed that, on meeting the Kyranga or some great chief, he would

¹ The phrase "their god" (*Kyala gudi*) is normally used by pagan natives to mean the ancestral spirits, or some one serving them. The term *Kyala*, which originally referred only to one of the most influential Ndyakusa spirits, has now been identified either with the Christian God or with deity in general throughout all this area.

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man is rightly belonged, he would at once fall down dead. And many stories are still told of such happenings in the past.

And besides this there was the fact that the Kyrongo, being the richest man in Ngondo and in the most intimate contact with the ivory traders, could secure medicines from a distance, which had a greater reputation than local ones.

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But, as in the theistic aspect of the religion of Ngondo there was considerable local and family autonomy, so also was there in the magical aspect; and here there was individual autonomy also. Lesser rulers had lesser magic than Mbande, but still it was magic. Ordinary chiefs, for instance, had magically filled robes with which gave their people military success. And every individual could go to a doctor and exchange a little of his surplus food for magic. Success in love and hunting, in warfare and legal disputes, good crops and good health—all alike, it was believed, magic could give.

(c). THE ELEMENT OF WITCHCRAFT.

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Both in Ngondo and among the Nyakyusa it was believed that certain communions had magic in their stomachs which gave them the power of witchcraft (*amanga* or *amanga*?) and among those who had this power were the great-communions of every chiefdom. Normally a ruling chief was spiritually protected by his great-communions from the malicious attacks of other witches, but, if he did wrong, then the great-communions, as it was held, would cease to protect him and join in the attack.

Now in many circumstances the great-communions' power of witchcraft and the power of the chief's dual possessions were believed to act together. The anger of witches and that of the ancestors were sharply distinguished in theory, but in practice they often coincided. The great-communions, for example, not only had the power of bewitching their chief but also of appealing to his possessions to punish him for wrongdoing; and on particular occasions they were often believed to do both at once.⁹ And the culture of Ngondo had similar powers in relation to the Kyrongo.⁹

⁹ *Chamber* is usually used when the act of witchcraft is disapproved of and *amanga* when it is approved of by the speaker.

¹⁰ A point of considerable theoretical interest is raised by the reported statements of one local informant on these matters that it was because they were witches that the great-communions had this power of rebuking the chief's ancestors, that they were to the chief's ancestors in their capacity of witches and in the exercise of witchcraft (i.e. by means of the magic in their stomachs). But our evidence on this point is not yet conclusive.

¹¹ So we were told when we put the question; but it was never substantiated. It was the fact which the culture of Ngondo had over the Kyrongo in consequence of its magical dual which was the more emphasized.

692 permanent social relationships beyond the local groups of childhood and
 but, and by the religious exclusion of the Kpungu. Now every one of
 these factors has today ceased to operate. And it is worth dwelling on
 this, for it follows that the constitution of the middle period has ceased to
 exist and something radically different has been developed in its place.
 Divine kingship and the ivory trade are dead, a host of complex and
 permanent relationships now covers Nganda and links it to the outside
 world, the Kpungu rules his people in person, under Government. And
 the continuity which is aimed at by a policy of "indirect rule" is thus
 only possible in Nganda to a very limited extent.

On the other hand, as some continuity is inevitable even through the
 most radical political change, so an acceptance by the Government of that
 inevitability is itself a factor of political order. It is far easier to rule
 Nganda to-day through the Kpungu and the custom of Nganda than it
 would be, say, through a committee of commissioners chosen for their
 personal ability; for the successors of the traditional rulers still have a
 status in Nganda which is continuous, though not identical with that of
 the past.

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 Christianity has gained a great hold in Nganda,¹ and has helped to
 undermine the old pagan faith even among those who do not profess it.
 And the whole hierarchically organized system of pagan ritual is almost
 dead. A few days after our arrival in Nganda, in July 1937, the custom of
 Nganda organized the clearing out of the shrine, for a special purpose.
 A bad plague of rats had appeared in the country and an old woman had
 announced prophetically that it was due to the anger of the spirits. Maken
 did all the organizing, for, as he said to us: "The present Kpungu
 concerned all interest in these things years ago and told me to arrange
 without him. So I went and told Kalunga and Mwanungulu and
 Mwanungulu, who is the master of the shrine of Nganda; it is their
 business to tell their people." But of the hundred old shrines and custom
 in the Nganda plain only four shrines and a few custom remained to the
 customers to get out their old bones and to bring the shrine to Kpungu.
 How many customers got out their bones I do not know, for we did not
 hear of the ritual until it was over. Even this, however, was an exceptional
 occasion and the regular yearly performance of the ritual has ceased.
 Neither is the old four-day ritual any longer performed.

The Great Mission in Nganda concentrated from the first on the
 conversion and education of the sons of leading men, so that now many of
 the rulers themselves are either Christians or ex-Christians. The
 present Kpungu was, as we have seen, a Christian, and, though he has

¹ 40% of the population profess Christianity.

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 now abandoned his Christianity and taken a number of wives, he appears to be wholly sceptical of pagan beliefs. "It is I who have killed the custom of praying in the sacred groves," he told us, "for my brother, Mwangulaha, used to give the nobles of Ngonde cattle for sacrifice; but I have never once given them a beast, nor do I give them hens, nor beer, nor flour." He subsequently admitted, however, that he did sometimes give them "a few pence" to buy a hen for sacrifice. Many of the old magical talismans he certainly no longer observes and we have no evidence that he observes any; while the magical possessions of his predecessors are mostly lost.

That the old beliefs survive in the minds of many men in Ngonde, both pagan and Christian, we have certain evidence; but upon those beliefs little public action is now taken. The profession of Christianity is normal among the younger people, and their attitude to the ritual which occurred during our visit was one of amusement. And even the belief in *witchcraft*, which has proved in many parts of Africa to be most persistent, is beginning in Ngonde to be publicly called in question by some of the pagans themselves.¹

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 The present Native rulers of Ngonde are thus no longer generally believed to control the destinies of their people; rain, health and fertility are no longer in their gift. And this brings radical changes into all political relationships. It is by their secular functions alone that the present Native rulers stand or fall. The losing of the public gardens of the *Kyungu* by his people, for instance, was largely kept up in former times because of his rain-making powers; he gave them rain, they gave him service. But, if he is now still able to claim this service from them, it is because he gives them other things than rain.²

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 Thus again the decline of the old beliefs inevitably alters the balance of power between the different political authorities. The *Kyungu* is no longer a magical object carefully excluded and controlled by the nobles of Ngonde; and so he now rules his people in person. It is he himself who now takes all the major decisions, within the sphere of responsibility allowed him by the Government. The nobles of Ngonde are reduced to a merely advisory status. While the decline of the old *witchcraft* and *witchcraft* beliefs brings a similar change into the relations of every chief with his great-commoners. Many chiefs in Ngonde will fear that they will fall if they offend their great-commoners, but so we do not,³ and it

¹ The same cannot be said of the Nipetyans, among whom, for various reasons, the customs have made far fewer converts in proportion to the total population. Among the Nipetyans the old rituals and beliefs are still very much alive.

² (Cf. note p. 33)

³ One of the chiefs, for example, is an ordained minister of the Church of Central Africa (Protestant).

is generally admitted that all chiefs are less affected by this fear than they used to be. The secularization of the constitution tends, in this connection, to make it more autocratic.

On the economic side it is difficult to exaggerate the change in the relative wealth of rulers and people. The change is temporarily obscured by the historical accident of the present Kyungu's personal fortune, but this, when he dies, will go to his own heir, not to his successor in the Kyungulip. The Kyungu's total official salary in 1937 was £72 a year and those of the "Sub-chiefs" varied from about £4 10s. to £12 a year. The nobles of Ngondo all received either 10s. or 15s. a year, with the exception of Melwa who received 30s. These salaries, which are paid out of the Native Treasury, are the modern substitutes for the profits of the ivory-trade, which the Kyungu shared with his subordinates, together with the regular tribute of food and the proceeds of tribal warfare and of punitive expeditions; all of which sources of income have now dried up. And these salaries do not make possible the giving of any valuable gifts to subordinates and subjects. The local rulers also receive slight financial subsidies from the Native Treasury. Each "Village Headman" is allowed to retain 3d. from the tax of every adult male subject of his own and the "Important Headmen" (great chiefs) receive in addition subsidies ranging from 5s. to 40s. a year. This custom has replaced that of the requisitioning of food; but, owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms and fiefs of the plain, few "Village Headmen" receive more than £1 a year from this source.¹

It is open to commentators, on the other hand, to become as rich or richer than most of their rulers. The head clerk in the Boma in 1937 received £52 a year, and there were fifty-three other Government employees who all received £12 or over; Native Christian Ministers and Evangelists all received many times the salary of Melwa while young men often returned from the Lupa gold-fields with savings of several pounds.

The decline of polygyny in Ngondo again reduces the relative wealth of the subordinate chiefs and nobles in comparison with their people. Women are increasingly reluctant, for various reasons, to be married by polygamists, and the old style of entertainment is changing. Few chiefs and nobles, save the present Kyungu himself, now have sufficient wives and unmarried children to be able to entertain on a large scale. In the case of ordinary chiefs and territorial nobles (the "Village Headmen" of to-day) this poverty is not in itself very significant, for with the dwindling

¹The average stipend of the one hundred and twenty-five "Village Headmen" in the Ngondo plain was almost exactly 10/- per annum in 1936. They had, that is, an average of forty-two pence each.

593 they continually give each other cows; between their respective sons
the exchange usually continues, but between their grandsons it lapses.
595 Reciprocity is expected and can be legally endorsed, but it is not insisted
686 upon so long as the two men concerned are friends, and its legal endorsement is once breaks the relationship. If two such half-brothers (or their sons) quarrel, one may take legal action for "separation" (*shukha*) against the other. The cows that have been handed over by both since the beginning of the relationship (perhaps twenty or thirty cows before) are counted up, and one or the other is ordered to pay over the balance to make the numbers equal. After this the two are "no longer kinsmen," they have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

593 It is usual for a father to create this relationship between his son
428 and the eldest of each group of half-brothers, so that by this exchange of cows the family is held together. The linkage of half-brothers whether by blood or by "milking each others' cows," is important inheritance. If a man with no half-brother dies and leaves no sons, his sons too young to inherit, then the inheritance passes to a linked half-brother; to a half-brother linked by blood if there is one, if there is none then to one linked by exchange of cows.

• 771 Religion enters continuously into family life and helps to maintain wider kinship bonds also. The Nyakyusa religion falls, broadly, into three parts: The Ancestor cult, Witchcraft and Magic. Taken as a whole their religion, as they believe, secures for them many of the most important values of life, health, good crops and success in various enterprises; it provides an intelligible explanation of death and misfortune by tracing them to the ill-will either of the ancestral spirits or of living persons acting through witchcraft or magic; in its rituals it manifests fear and confidence is by hope and confidence; while the believed destructive action of the ancestors and of man is generally, though not entirely, linked with morality.² The commonest explanation of misfortune is that some wrong done by the victim, or by his close kinsman, has provoked the spirits or his fellow men to anger.

769 As long as a man has alive a father, a father's half-brother, or a senior
753 brother or half-brother³ of his own, this senior kinsman deals with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children; and health is the chief value which his prayers are believed to secure for them. In the absence of sickness or misfortune an appeal is

² Cf. Godfrey Wilson, "An African Mindset," *Afric. Soc. rev.*

³ Provided the relationship between them has not been legally broken (note above).

ever made to the spirits, but when some member of a family or his wife or child falls sick the anger of the spirits is often suspected as a possible cause. There are usually other causes suspected as well, and so the sickness is taken to a diviner for diagnosis. Various causes are suggested to the diviner and he selects one among them. If the anger of the spirits is selected then this senior kinsman must pray for the one who is sick, if he is to recover. When half-brothers live at a distance from one another, after their father and his brothers have died, then each may pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness in his own family but if the sickness persists then a message must be sent to the senior kinsman. And, as the anger of the spirits is due to wrong doing, the sinner must reform his ways as well.

The wrongs which cause the spirits to anger are usually breaches of family morality. If a man does not respect his father or insult him, if he fails to support to feed and provide for the dead man's children, then when sickness falls on him or his own children it will probably be traced to the anger of the spirits at his behaviour.

Spicer does not allow any full analysis of religion in family life and in the relationships of kinsmen and affines. Not only the ancestor cult but witchcraft and magic are factors in them. A man's neglect of a wife or his cruelty to her may, it is believed, lead to his falling sick through her witchcraft and that of sympathetic neighbours; his relations with his father-in-law are affected by the fear that if he offends him, his father-in-law may, by magical means, kill his children, and so on.

Wider kinship groupings than the family gather at ceremonies and are recognised in the rules against incest. But there are no clans; there is no descent group continuous down the generations with a common name and definite membership. Each individual family has its own generations of kinship, the effective kinship of a man and his son, or of two half-brothers are not all the same, while each single person is especially related by respect, affection and mutual obligations to particular kinsmen beyond his own family. Descent, as we have seen, is particularly except in the case of illegitimate children. A man asked for his *shakala* always means first the names of his paternal kinsmen as far as he can remember. But if he is related through mother or grandmother to a chief he usually volunteers this fact as part of his *shakala*; and questions always elicit some knowledge of his mother's paternal kinship and a statement that "they are my *shakala* too." Descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are to-day forbidden to marry, and an case of infringement has come to my notice; descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry but, I am told,

chief from the warden attacks of witches; but if ever there is a just ground of offence they are believed to join their own power of witchcraft in the general attack. I know one chief who dare not give a judgment in a dispute between two of his villages for fear of the indignant witchcraft of the losing side. And a general unpopularity is believed always to lead, sooner or later to a chief's death.

Chiefs also, like other men, fear the use of sorcery (i.e. destructive magic) against them, and use a number of protective "medicines" (i.e. mixtures of magic) to protect themselves from it. They also use powerful "medicines" to give themselves personal invulnerability, prestige and authority among their people.

While in the families of commoners an ancestral spirit is only believed to affect the lives of his own descendants, the ancestors of a chief, on the other hand, are supposed to influence, for good or ill, the fortunes of whole chiefdoms. Rain and good crops, the fertility of women and cattle are dependent upon their good will, which in its turn is believed to depend upon a numerous sacrifice of cows. And for this sacrifice the chiefs, their living descendants, are responsible. But, owing to the continuous division of chiefdoms every generation, several chiefs are concerned in each sacrifice; every dead chief is a source of misfortune or of blessing to the members of all his direct descendants. And so the discussion of this part of the Nyakyusa religious beliefs as to the investigation of the groups which extend beyond the boundaries of a single chiefdom.

(c) Groups wider than the Chiefdom

When a chief dies he is buried near the house of his senior great wife and trees are planted on his grave. The trees grow and form a sacred grove (ilipata) tended by tabors. Each of these groves is at first the religious centre of one, later of a number of chiefdoms, and in these the sacrifices are made. Responsibility for leading the cow for sacrifice is a particular grave duty with one of the living chiefs concerned, but responsibility for initiating the ritual and performing it lies not only with the chiefs but also with the hereditary priests (amapaga) in each chiefdom. These hereditary priests are descended, some from the great commoners of the dead chief who is buried in that particular grove, some from his full brothers. The ritual is secret, there is no gathering of the people at the sacrifice, and only chiefs and those with hereditary priesthood

*I am speaking here of the religious centres of the Nyakyusa groups and the Nyakyusa groups. I believe that of the Kalam and Mbarika are very similar, but I have not studied them in detail.

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COMMONAL RITUALS OF THE NYAKYUSA

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(82) grass. According to custom, we should kill a bull here at the same time as one is killed at Lolunga. A messenger from there finds us eating. That was the custom when the chiefs were really chiefs. Now we neglect the ritual. Mwakinye (111) cut a ripe banana stem for us but now the bananas are rotting in the homesteads without ripening [owing to our failure to sacrifice]. If our fathers did not sleep they sacrificed cattle, but if we do not sleep we merely suffer loss.

Then Kaitile recalled the quarrel between the men of Mwakinye (111) and those of Lolunga.

(944) Why did one insult Mwakinye (111) saying 'What remains of your power?' When we built the Court House in Mwakinye's country, Mwakinye's men came to help, and some advised that a bull should be sent to Lolunga to seek blessing on the Court, but others said: 'What use is Lolunga?' . . . Mwakinye cut a banana stem for us and said 'Look another way at those Mwakinye' (95, i.e. identifying Kaitile with the grandfather of the chief Mwakinye whom he represented).

This, however, was an invasion of Kaitile's. He continued: 'I, Kaitile, have seen a sacrifice at the grove of Mwakinye (82) once, at that of Mwakinye (111) once, and at that of Mwakinye (112) once, but at Lolunga Kaitile has sacrificed us frequently.' To which Mwakinye replied: 'Yes, Kaitile has helped us.'

Under pressure from Kaitile and the other priests of his children Mwakinye did eventually provide a cow for sacrifice at the grove of his father Mwakinye (82) but the description of this ritual is deferred to a later chapter.

• 771 A fundamental conception in Nyakyusa religion is that the proper working of the natural order depends upon harmony of the social order; on proper co-operation between the 'divine king' and his 'son' the chief, between priests and chiefs, and between them and the whole community. If the *Lawanda* or a rain-maker is offended, that causes drought or flood in the area of his influence. When there is heavy rain in July it is said, 'There is anger at Lolunga' or 'There is anger at Lawanda's place'. Mwakinye II (78) talking of how angry he had been over an insult remarked, 'That is how the wet season there would have been a torrent of rain.'

(976) And not only does quarrelling between chiefs and priests bring public misfortune; it runs upon their own heads. Now Kaitile linked his ill-health with the quarrel between Mwakinye (111) of Lolunga and the men of Mwakinye (111) over the Court, and Mwakinye's failure to provide cattle for sacrifice has just been

THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

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indicated (*vide supra*, p. 35). And, as we shall see later, he also suspected that his quarrels with the Kings priests and with the commoner priests of Mwaipaga's children made him ill.

Chief, and even the 'divine king' himself, lived in fear of the implacable anger of their people, more particularly of their village headmen and priests, believing that such anger would bring them sickness, and this belief gave headmen and priests a very strong hold over their lord. How it worked was illustrated by an incident at Lohaga.

Mwanjale II (56) remarked to Mwachilima (111): 'I went to summon Mwaeni (a commoner priest) for the ritual tomorrow but he refused saying: "I shall not come." He is angry because he was not called to the ritual at your home, nor was he told formally when the Kings came, or when Mwaipaga [G.W.] came.' Mwachilima (111) asked: 'Will you pay him?' [i.e. admit your mistake and offer him compensation]. Mwanjale replied that he would, and Mwachilima expressed disgust. One of the Kings priests who was listening broke into the conversation: 'Ignore him if he refuses to come. If it were as we should leave him and celebrate without him, but you Nyakyusa are all witches, and you fear to ignore a man who refuses to come to a ritual saying that he will bewitch you. You are cowards, you are!'

As if in Godfrey Wilson asked if there were no witchcraft in Bulungwa. The Kings priest replied: 'There is none, but if the chief gives orders to celebrate a ritual and someone refuses to come we ignore him, and celebrate without him. You Nyakyusa pay a man for doing wrong. A man refuses to come when he should and then you pay him! If you are afraid of witchcraft why not finish the ritual and send his portion of meat to him afterwards?'

Another priest rejoined: 'Then he would say it was too small a gift.'

The commoner priests then could united even the Lwanda (for Mwanjale II acted in the place of the Lwanda though he was not installed), but at the same time the mystical power of the Lwanda was feared both by ordinary chiefs and commoners. Mwaipaga (46), who ruled before the European occupation, deposed and slayed Mwachilima the Lwanda (56), and killed some of his men, because 'Lwanda had spoiled the year', but he sent back the cattle that were seized.

In the old days it did not matter killing the Lwanda's men (in war), but one dared to take his cattle, they feared but he would spoil the year and send too much rain, and a plague of illness, and cause the cattle to

THE 'DIVINE KING'

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anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyrungu] where you forget to ask about. 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyrungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngondo would approach the Kyrungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was no-one (one of the dead Kyrungu) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove.

Thus to insult Kyrungu was not only unreasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord.

The people of Ngondo had large fields as tribute to the Kyrungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain water' (see *infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to him. . . . 'They heard and heard and heard and their wives pleaded, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyrungu created much rain.'

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyrungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyrungu . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you omit our child?"'

The rainfall in the Ngondo plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakya valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a means of ensuring in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyas and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lohaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the cattle bear children, may the cattle and flocks increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the widows not beg anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the akus each year after the break of the rains.

Towards Christmas time, when the first rains and the first

(6) CEREMONIAL RITUALS OF THE NYAKYUSA

773 Among some other peoples with a corresponding ritual, but the young men seize cattle belonging to the older generation, thus asserting their authority. The opposition of generations is taken for granted and given expression in constitutional form; the ritual is a celebration out of 'rebellion' but of growth. For all their reluctance to hand over power the fathers 'injure' and are glad because their sons have grown up. Change in the structure of society after the evolution of the heroic age, is not celebrated, and is scarcely admitted, but the process of growth, of death and preservation, is expressed in every ritual. Indeed, the ritual cycle is like a figure with the theme of death and which constantly recurs.

774 The pagan universe is just and orderly. There is a cosmic
775 attached to spilling blood or binding a man with ropes. The anger
776 of men, or of the deities who are moved by men, is what brings
777 most misfortune, and often, the Nyakyusa think, such anger is
justified. Even medicines may be effective, injuring only the
guilty. The good man who celebrates the proper ritual, fulfils his
kinship obligations, and keeps on good terms with his neighbours,
is protected, while the evil-doer falls ill. But some evil men,
witches and sorcerers, attack the innocent out of jealousy and
spite. Evil to the Nyakyusa, lies primarily within men: it is 'anger
in the heart' which materialises as poisons that threaten others.

(57) Because they are aware of angry impulses in themselves the
Nyakyusa find it difficult to believe that any society without
witchcraft can exist; to say that there is no witch is like suggesting
that there is no ill will or anger in a community. And since anger
brings misfortune there is an obligation on those whose anger
might have caused sickness or ill luck to express goodwill by
spitting or blowing out water, and saying, 'May the patient
recover' or 'I am without anger'. Among communities the most
required to show goodwill is usually a sister relation, rather than a
cousped wife (as among the Aka). But a neighbour or
(57) friend who might be a witch or sorcerer should also express
goodwill when he visits the sick, and fellow kinsmen who have ill
luck may stop to declare their goodwill to one another, as we have
seen. If a chief or prime-chief is sick the village headmen and prime
must visit him well and confess any anger they have felt towards
him. The blowing out of water is a symbol of confusion, 'bringing

* For a full account of the belief in witchcraft and the 'words of men', cf. Wilson
Wilson, *Chiefdoms*, pp. 92-101, 193-104.

QUARTER CONCLUSION

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out all the anger that is within', 'admitting that I have done wrong', begging pardon (shabshaye) and also a symbol of submission and so of detaching off the shades (shid asya, pp. 122, 123, 124, 125, 126). Good health depends upon good social relationships, and of one who is ailing it is customarily said: 'It seems as if they (unspecified) had hated him.' Further, the proper working of the natural order is held to depend upon the proper working of the social order. Drought, or 'cold', or pestilence falls on a chieftain if there is quarrelling between chief and people, and the anger of the *Laamba* with his 'sons' will destroy the crops of *Isaya*. The *Laamba*, the chieftain, many of the men of power (*shamanga*), and many medicines help to maintain an orderly nation; only the witches and sorcerers work against it. In short, order and right living are an integral part of Nyaburua religion as they are of Christianity.

The ultimate goal is the power of fertility, of generation, which lies in the *Laamba* and shades; the punishment for evil-doing is ill-health of body or mind and evil-living. And towards the *Laamba* and shades, who are both life-givers and avengers, the attitude of man is clearly ambivalent: the shades are driven away—'let them warm themselves over there in the long grass', men say when they throw out the shades (shid asya, pp. 125-6) but they bring them home again to 'warm themselves by the hearth'.

In analysing the shades of the Nyaburua, I have been driven to the conclusion that they are, in fact, dogged by a sense of guilt,¹ for this is the only hypothesis on which the linking of misfortune and sin, the preoccupation with 'ill', and the recurring acts of purification can be explained. One of the sources of this sense of guilt is, I suggest, awareness of anger within, for it is believed that such anger injures others. An act of confusion is essential to every church, and what must be confessed are anger, hard thoughts, ill will against others. The anger is acknowledged to come primarily from men—it is the angry person who causes the shades to action by cursing over the fire—but the guilt, the ill, is projected on to the shade or the *Laamba*. It is when they 'hated me' that men are contaminated. A shade or a man that is angry—good, righteous—is one without a grudge, without anger against anyone, free of witchcraft, and free of any transgression—'there is no accusation against him'.

¹ I studied the matter of 'Nyaburua Moral and Symbolism', *American Anthropologist*, 4, 2 (1934), pp. 125-6.

164 COMMUNAL RITUALS OF THE NYAKYUSA

768 swept through Balipakyusa in the early 1930's; perhaps other
769 similar movements preceded it—we do not know. What is clear
771 is that traditionally there was continuous public pressure
772 someone hated within the village and the kinship group; to rid
773 oneself of it by confusion and an expression of goodwill. In pages
774 thought Uapya is a society without witches or sorcerers and
though it was never achieved, everyone is convinced that formerly
these evil-doers were fewer than now, because they were restrained
by law, whereas 'witches' now go un-free.

185 The interests of the Nyakyusa are personal and practical.
Health, fertility, and amity between kinsmen and neighbours
are what they seek. It is with rain and drought, with the rise of
the Lake or the striking of lightning which destroys property
with stock, crops, and the wild animals which prey upon them
that the myths are concerned. We could trace no tales of the sun,
moon, and stars, and no rituals are directed to them. Reference
made to volcanic disturbances in the myths of the herons—
'the ground rumbling' when Nkubere and Kyala walked, and there
are stories of small lakes disappearing and reappearing elsewhere—
but the concern shown is surprisingly little if an eruption indeed
destroyed villages last century as Mr. Harkin's single informant
suggests (*vide supra*, p. 16).

787 Reality is thought to be revealed to men in dreams, by prophets
who 'go down thinking like the roots of a tree' to the world of the
789 shades, and by oracles. What men seek to know are the causes of
misfortune—public and private—and the identity of witches.
Occasionally, it is said, a prophet has looked into the future and
foretold drought, or flood, or the coming of Europeans—'white
things on the Lake'—against whom it would be foolish to fight,
but for the most part they are concerned with the misfortune
[189] that exist, and urging men to pray in the groves. The content
of the oracles is not honoured in Nyakyusa tradition; the man of
spiritual power is a detective—a discoverer of evil-doers—or a
administrator whose wisdom adds to his authority.

193 Men are preoccupied with their relationships to other living
men—their kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow office-holders—
● 778 and with their dead fathers. They are not concerned with the
relationship to Kyala. The rituals celebrated by kinsmen are
directed to the shades not to any supreme God, and it is quarrelling
between kinsmen that argues the shades and makes the celebration
of certain rituals necessary. The communal rituals are

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directed towards heroes who are also forefathers, and it is quarrelling between chiefs and priests or village headmen that disturbs the natural order and causes disease and failure of crops. Kasile was a famous priest, a man of perception, more than usually aware of the deeper implications of the rituals, but he never spoke of any personal relationship with Kyala, and he brushed aside the diviner's suggestion that his sickness was due to Kyala. He was dogged by a sense of guilt which, in pagan terms, could be redeemed only by sacrifice to his father and persuading his fellow priests to 'speak out' and admit their anger against him. Only when he was referring explicitly to Christian doctrine did he hint at redemption by Kyala (*vide supra*, pp. 128-9, 141). The genius of Nyakyusa religion is an awareness of the corrupting power of 'anger in the heart' and the necessity of confession and reconciliation if men are to be healthy in mind and body; they have no developed conception of God comparable to that of the Nuer. To them it is not 'the first and greatest commandment' which is familiar but 'the second which is like unto it'.

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PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

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Christian ones, do not celebrate and nothing happens to them, ^{799^a}
 so we no longer fear ourselves.' By 1937 the pagan rituals of ^{715^a}
 kinship had been largely dropped in Ngonde, and around Kangwe ^[771]
 mission they were disappearing, though in Selva no pagan dared
 neglect them. They were taken more seriously by the women than
 by the men, and many of the young men were equally scornful.
 The young men are eclectic in their beliefs, joining at the twin
 ritual when they may be fearful of any neglect of the ritual of
 death; doubting the power of rain-makers, but terrified of a
 neighbour's sorcery.

(1) CHRISTIAN RITUAL AND DOGMA

And what are the alternatives to the traditional rituals?
 Celebrations at death, marriage, and birth continue—probably
 some sort of ritual on these occasions is universal in human
 societies. There is no celebration of a girl's puberty, as among the
 pagans, but the ritual of confirmation is, in one sense, parallel, for ^[181]
 it is an acknowledgment of maturity by the acceptance of an
 individual into the full fellowship of the Church; but maturity in
 the Church, and the symbolic death and rebirth, are not neces-
 sarily linked with physiological development, as they are in the
 pagan ritual of *shungu*.¹

All the Christian rituals are communal in the sense that they are
 centred in the Church—the Christian community; some is
 primarily a ritual of kinship. This is most pointed at a christening, ^[152]
 when a child is received into the fellowship of the Church,
 whereas in the pagan birth ritual it is acknowledged as a member
 of the father's lineage by being given *ilipili* medicine (which is
 'the blood of the lineage') by its paternal grandmother. Some-
 times both rituals are celebrated by Christians who interpret the
ilipili as an acknowledgment of legitimacy, and a medicine
 necessary to the child's health, but this is frowned upon by the ^[763]
 more orthodox. A dying man is comforted by the priest or elders
 of the Church, and in some communions he receives the sacra-
 ment, the symbol of his salvation through Christ and his member-
 ship of the community of believers. At a funeral the members of the ^[764]
 local Christian congregation take the leading part, comforting the
 mourners with prayers and hymns, digging the grave, and burying
 the dead. The contrast with a pagan funeral, in which cattle are

¹ The pagan rituals referred to in this section are described in *Study of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*.

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seasons of 'wet' and 'cold' into which the Nyakyusa year is divided; but there are parallels in the traditional seasons for rain, and at sowing and harvest, which the Christians are quick to point out. What is totally new to the Nyakyusa is the division of a year into weeks, each with a day of rest and worship; but the conception once introduced has been accepted very quickly, and it is common to find pagans as well as Christians refraining from work in their fields on a Sunday. This is partly the effect of experience in European employment when Sunday is a day off, but partly, perhaps, it is because the idea of taboo is deeply embedded in pagan thought, and the teaching of some missionaries and converts has been in terms of taboo—of prohibitions connected with 'the Sabbath'.

In the Christian villages and village-outposts, some at least of the converts gather for morning and evening prayer and on Sundays in their little mud Church or school-house, and once a month or once a quarter they gather in the main Church of the district. Besides this, those seeking baptism or preparing for confirmation gather for regular weekly instruction over a period of two or three years. There is thus regular common worship and instruction, and a strong sense of community between fellow Christians, particularly when they are in a small minority in an area.

But though the Christian is a member of a Church and worships in community, the emphasis (at least in the Protestant Churches in BuNyakyusa) tends to be on the individual, and some pagans spoke as if turning Christian implied an abandoning of public duties. Kestell's remark that if it were not for his responsibility for a ritual he would be baptised, has already been quoted (p. 141), and the young priest of PoliKyala said the same. Whether these two were serious in wishing to become Christian is irrelevant here; they both believed that they had duties to their community which could not be fulfilled if they were Christians. The 'individualism' of young Christians is a matter of concern to many missionaries who are struggling to create among Christians that very sense of mystical union which pagan kinsmen exhibit.

The idea of the corporate nature of the worshipping group, with all that implies in mutual responsibility, is but one example of the profound similarity between the underlying ideas of pagan and Christian ritual that will be apparent to most readers. In the pagan tradition confusion, oblation, and communion are as essential to the sacrifices at the groves as they are to the Christian eucharist;

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(26) CHURCHIAL RITUALS OF THE NYAKYAAN

marriage is a sacrament, a mystical union of husband and wife who wash together in the 'blood' of the husband's lineage; and at death kinmen share a communion with the 'beloved departed'.

We have already touched on the changing conception of *Kyala*.

The idea of a supreme power, or creator, distinct from the *shades* and *humans*, is clear enough to Christians and is becoming more and more familiar to pagans, a young priest even insisting that his father and *Kashile* could bring rain only 'if God will' (see above, p. 113). Christians believe that 'God alone works rain', and they are profoundly mystical of the pagan rain-maker.

The Christians also speak of *heres* (*shades*) whom some identify with 'bliss' (*Loombo*) and to whom the more orthodox ascribe evil dreams of snakes and lions and fighting, which the pagans ascribe to witchcraft. To the pagans the *shade* is the witch come to attack him; to the Christian it is *heres* come to tempt him. The evolution, following the teaching of missionaries, deny the existence of witchcraft, but most admit to a lively fear of anxiety which is rationalised as 'poisoning', though when the conception is examined it can be shown to include such hostile poisons put in food or drink. Some of our chosen Christian friends admitted their fears. X, the Christian wife of a pagan chief, said one day when we were discussing witchcraft: 'You dissemble like all Europeans, you do not wish to admit belief in witchcraft, you are just pretending.' 'You really think we believe in it?' 'Yes, we all know that Europeans just hide their belief.'

Another chief's wife, Y, also a professing Christian, said: 'We all believe in witchcraft, it really exists.' Then she went on to tell how someone had come to 'chaka' her one night recently when she was visiting her own people:

I woke out of a heavy sleep with a pain in the back of my neck and my head. It was as if someone was cramping on my head. I woke up feeling heavy, I was very heavy. I said: 'If I die, you also will die. Who is outside? Who is shaking me? Do they not fear God (*Kyala*)?' Then someone kicked the door and I shouted, 'Mother, mother?' and I heard footsteps going away.

[622] When asked whether she believed that village headmen protected their people from witchcraft she went on:

They fight the witches by night, they protect their people, they see the witches and drive them away.

Quarren: How do you know that witches really exist, do they admit themselves to be witches?

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keep in sympathy; as one of our friends explained, the food is hard to accept food from the neighbouring tribes who were 'in dirty in their cooking'.

[57] Both pagans and Christians give their faith to resurrection, but the interpretations differ radically. To the pagan the shade is resurrected 'in the belly of his child', it scarcely has any separate existence. To Christians the personality, the individual soul, is something indestructible and continuing. This theological difference is but one facet of a deep cleavage between the pagan view of a man and his relations with his group, and the Christian view.

[65] Because the traditional religion is a cult of the shade, piety consists in doing just as father did. It is a sign of traditional strength, departure from traditional ways, that is held to bring evilness, sterility, or death. But Christianity is revolutionary; it is the yeast working in society to transform it. That is often forgotten in communities with a Christian tradition, but where the Gospel has been preached only for a generation and confusing Christians are but one in six, it is in men's minds all the time. The Myakyma could not be unaware that the Gospel implied changing their society.

[74] In the pagan tradition the meticulous performance of the ritual is stressed: the right medicines; the right persons; the right order of events are all important. The attitude of mind of the participants matters also—if they are on bad terms the ritual will be ineffective—but goodwill and forgiveness alone are useless without the performance of the proper ritual. In the Christian tradition, as interpreted to us by Myakyma converts, it is the inward and spiritual attitude of the participants that is stressed.

• [77] Finally, all the pagan rituals are directed to driving off the shades or the haves, whereas the Christian rituals are the 'means of grace', of coming near to God. Christians pray that the Holy Spirit should take up his shade within them; they seek to emulate the saints who 'walked with God'. Our Christian friends were quite clear about the contrast here between the pagan and Christian traditions: it is crystallised in the attitude to dreams; if a pagan dreams of converse (akwasgala) with shades, he fears death; if a Christian dreams of converse with God he rejoices greatly because it means he is gaining strength in Christianity.

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Councils, the importance of establishing machinery for their appointment in chiefdoms where the 'coming out' is no longer held is obvious. [77] [22] [23]

The traditional communal rituals have not been dropped altogether, but their celebration is sporadic and not everyone supports them. Careful enquiries suggest that in less than half of the chiefdoms has the 'coming out' been celebrated when it was due. In the most conservative portion of the district, Selya, there were celebrations in 1950 and 1954, but even in that area a number of the ruling chiefs have never 'come out'. The omission is due partly to the desire of the old men to retain office, partly to the increase in population and the planting of coffee which makes any new deal in land unacceptably, and partly to the feeling of many that the old ritual is an anachronism, if not directly incompatible with their new faith in Christianity. Some chiefs who have not 'come out' would welcome a celebration; one such told us that 'if the "coming out" died chieftainship would die'; but a young chief's personal wishes are not decisive in this matter. Sacrifices at the groves of chiefs and heroes are not as frequent as before, but they still occur at some groves in time of drought or other emergency. [78] [24] The Kings came to Lubaga in 1954, and they were expected to come and install Kasirir's heir in 1955. In 1954 also there were sacrifices to Mwalijonga (80) and Mwakiambwu (90) for it was a season of scarcity. Rituals for cleansing the country and sprinkling the homesteads occur sporadically 'when occasion demands', but not annually in any chiefdom and never in some. And when celebrations do occur they do not unite the people of a chiefdom as they used to do. Christians oppose them and many non-Christians are also sceptical. [77] [77]

In 1955 the traditional rituals celebrated by lineages and chiefdoms formed a coherent system. They were directed towards the shades and the heroes, as was manifest in the sacrifices and in the dramas of death and rebirth when those secluded 'dwelt with the shades' or were 'caught hold of' by Kyala.¹ The older participants were then conscious, in greater or lesser degree, of the symbolism implicit in the actions they performed. By 1955 the ritual cycle was nowhere celebrated in full: what remained were 'bits and pieces' of ritual, none of them fully intelligible without reference to the complete cycle. The link between the rites and the shades and the heroes was less clear, and the symbolism less [76] [76]

¹ *Field notes*, pp. 27-28, 70-82; *Records of Events*, pp. 51, 58, 101, 111-12, 202.